

STEPHEN M. LINSKY – WARD 2 ALDERMAN

CONSTITUENT UPDATE

NEWTONVILLE VILLAGE CENTER

Hello Everyone:

Over a year ago, the Newton Board of Aldermen approved a comprehensive plan as required under the city's charter. The plan took a number of years of dedicated effort by a commission appointed by the mayor. I was able to join the commission for the last couple of years of its work. It can be viewed at: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/docs/2008-comp-plan.pdf>

Now it is time to put this body of work into action in guiding this city's future re-development.

One area that could greatly benefit from the concepts set out in the plan is the Austin Street municipal lot. Currently, this lot hosts the vehicular parking needs of a number of Newtonville's commercial establishments. It also houses a Morgan Memorial trailer and some overflow parking from Newton North High School during its construction phase.

A sea of asphalt dotted by parking meters, the lot hasn't served as the subject of many artists' renderings. However, its potential has caught the eye of many. Last summer, Sasaki Associates, a nationally recognized architectural firm located in Watertown, chose the lot to serve as a project for its summer interns. The charrettes generated by these interns provide some imaginative renditions of what might be possible, particularly in respect to the village center's place as a major transportation node. They are viewable at: http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/development_review.asp

Prior to the construction of the Massachusetts Turnpike extension, Newtonville had a village center framed by its rail station, fountain, majestic church and the iconic Masonic Building. The village has, over the past fifty or so years, lacked such a center to complement its surrounding commercial and residential districts. This may become an opportunity to reestablish a village hub to enhance the existing infrastructure.

The Newton Housing Action Plan Initiative and the Economic Development Commission are taking the next step by inviting the community to participate in providing input in thinking through the possible options following the Board of Aldermen Real Property Re-Use Committee's recent indication of a favorable interest as to a potential re-use.

On Thursday evening, June 11th, at 7 PM, these two organizations are sponsoring a meeting at the New Art Center (61 Washington Park) to begin this process. The public is enthusiastically invited to attend and participate.

Feel free to contact me at: (617) 796-1701 or slinsky@newtonma.gov